

in every town, who were sometimes able, as at Ypres, to open the gates. The enemy could not have captured Ghent before winter drove them home, but the Regent was anxious to save South Flanders. This was why he gave battle, though according to Froissart it was a grave military blunder. The war was decided at Bosbec, near the shores of the Lys. The dense phalanxes of burgher spearmen, unprotected by archers or cavalry, were surrounded on all sides by the French knighthood and massacred where they stood. Those in the centre of the columns were pressed to death by thousands. Artevelde was smothered in a ditch by the fugitives of his own army. His brief and splendid career, scarcely twelve months long, resembles the course of a meteor across the sky, more closely than many longer lives to which that figure has been applied. He appeared for so short a time before the world that it is hard to estimate his true greatness. Lack of material renders the best histories of him unsatisfactory ; ¹ but Taylor has, in our own century, made him the hero of a fine historical play. Bosbec ended the dream of a united and independent Flanders, but Ghent still held out two years more. The war in 1383 was again a war between Ghent single-handed and the rest of Flanders under the Earl. Needless to say the English, now that their chance had gone by, attempted to undo what their dilatoriness had done, and flung themselves into the conflict with belated energy. Froissart suggests that jealousy of the democratic character of Artevelde's republic had made the English nobles half-hearted in his cause.² It is difficult to say whether this was so ; the movement of the city communes in Flanders had little in common with the Peasants* Bising in England. No such tendency on the part of the English municipalities can be detected; they were riotous but not revolutionary. Be this as it may, now that Bosbec had reassured the noblesse and the landed interest of all countries, the English lords, became anxious to support the last struggles of Ghent against the French, whose reputation as soldiers had been much repaired by their success against

¹ Two good monographs on ^cJames and Philip Van Artevelde, by MJV Hutton and Professor Ashley respectively, tell what there is **to** be told. * Froiss., **ii.** chap. 189.